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A Mother-Daughter/Sister Relationship

In *Jennifer and Rachel,* an article written by Lee M. Silver, the author suggests that no matter how controversial it is, reproductive cloning will eventually, if not in our lifetime, be openly accepted by the masses. Silver concludes various scenarios in his article and often presents arguments that he himself goes up against to make his ideas more persuasive.

To begin his stance, Silver sets up a scenario in the year 2049. Jennifer, the scenario’s main character, wakes up to the notion that is finally time for her to have a child and opts for becoming a single mother. She steers away from the idea of using donated sperm due to the high chance her child could contract any and all unwelcome traits and instead decides to use cells from her own body in order to make a baby.

Since cloning in the U.S. is against the law, Jennifer goes to the Grand Cayman Island where there is a human cloning facility. After shelling out $80,000 to the doctors on the island, a number of unfertilized eggs are taken from Jennifer’s ovaries, stripped of their nuclei, and then each is injected with cells from Jennifer’s mouth. At the time of Jennifer’s menstrual cycle, one of the embryos is placed in her uterus. Jennifer then becomes pregnant and nine months later, her daughter, Rachel, is born.

After this scenario plays itself out in Silver’s article, he states that the best way to look at if anything is wrong with cloning is to think about this: Did Jennifer birthing Rachel harm anything? Silver answers his own question by stating that obviously no ill has fallen Jennifer, but then looks at Rachel. One argument to be brought up concerning her is that creating a person’s genetic material deliberately steals their chance at having their own identity. Silver argues that there is no right given from nature which is defined as such. Silver notes that identical twins are born all the time as exact replicas of each other. It is also argued that Rachel is limited because she might learn of her future self. Silver replies that all children have some prior knowledge to how they will turn out due to the genetic material derived from their maternal parents.

Another argument that Silver faces is one delivered from the Vatican who views cloning as tampering with human embryos. The author then rebuttals with the notion that cloning does not mess with the embryos themselves, but only the egg cells. The side claiming that this form of reproduction takes God out of the picture is quickly shot down by Silver as he clearly states that one can never go up against this argument with science. Some say that cloning would hold back evolution due to its identicality. Silver says that cloning would only account for a small percent of the population due to the financial cost. In addition, children from different families would be different from each other.

Silver now goes on to what he calls “surreptitious cloning” which is using the DNA of other human beings without them knowing or agreeing to it. Silver asks if Jennifer’s parents should’ve been asked for consent before Jennifer used her cells to create Rachel. After all, Rachel contains genes from Jennifer whose genes are derived from her parents and so on. In the end, Silver states, at least Jennifer deliberately cloned herself.

Silver then brings up the Michael Jordan example to show how cloning could happen without obtaining consent. This states how easily someone could gain access to Michael Jordan’s DNA and create a clone of him surreptitiously. Silver creates the argument that this is indeed possible and that some could use it for foul play, but he counteracts his statement by saying that while a singular clone of a star athlete may go on to fame and fortune, the other twenty or so clones will not.

In conclusion to his article, Silver states that there will forever be couples or singular persons in need of a child who will turn to cloning. It will not involve a celebrity and will happen after consent is given. Silver suggests that donor cells might even be found in a catalog like sperm and egg cells are. But he also acknowledges the notion that surreptitious cloning will definitely be looked down upon even as it is slowly being accepted in other forms. But despite these things, Silver states, there will be that one person who will try.

Works Cited

Silver, Lee M. "Jennifer and Rachel." *Remaking Eden: Cloning and Beyond in a Brave New World* (1988): 117-25. Rpt. In *Writing in the Disciplines: A Reader and Rhetoric for Academic Writers,* 6th ed. Ed. Mary Lynch Kennedy and William J. Kennedy. Boston: Pearson 2009. 340-46. Print.